Minutes of the January 6, 2015 ICARC Meeting

Attendance:
Members:

KB3LBU (Craig Bigler)
KC3DTB(Denny Preisser)
N3WID (Nancy Reynolds)
K3PJ (Phil Kopczyk)
KB3JOD (Terry Carnahan)
KA3KFA, (Dave Steiner)
AA3IO (Ken Snyder)
KC3CDG (Joe Rankin)
N3DZ (Dave Dzelsky)
N3PHL (Alton Strong)
KC3DTE (Ian Bigler),
K3UX (Mike Reynolds)
KB3WG (Elmer Sorisio)
KM3M (Fred Maize)

Guests:

Al Fister (N3ZFZ)

Call to Order:

The "Board" meeting started at about 7:00 PM. Folks used this time to order food, eat, converse and discuss many general items of interest to the club at large. Also, some members used this time to pay for items in arrears: club dues, safety vests, and new repeater contribution.

Craig (KB3LBU), the President, called the general meeting to order at 7:31 pm. He asked for discussion of the December, 2014 minutes. He then asked for a motion of acceptance from the floor and Joe (KC3CDG) made a motion to accept the minutes as published and Elmer (KB3WG) seconded. The minutes were accepted unanimously. The president then asked for a financial report from the Treasurer.

Treasurer's Report:

Terry (KB3JOD), the Treasurer, made a detailed presentation of the financial situation, which may be obtained directly from him.

Terry reiterated that the club spending for 2014 exceeded the club income. He noted that we need to be very careful about this in the future.

Doug (K3LAB), Vice President asked Terry about the total donation to the new repeater fund as of tonight. Terry indicated that he had not totaled all of the donations because several were made this evening.

After the financial report was discussed a motion to accept was made by Fred (KM3M) and seconded by Phil (K3PJ). The report was accepted by a unanimous vote.

Craig then gave the annual ICARC Report highlighting the accomplishments and significant events for 2014. The full report is given as the last item at the end of the minutes below. He asked for a moment of silence for our members who had passed away during 2014 (Linda Kiehl and Dennis Whiston, they are missed by all).

Craig turned the meeting over to former member Mr. Al Fister who requested that ICARC provide communications assistance to the American Legion for their Veterans Day Parade to be held in November of 2015. They had significant problems in this regard in 2014 due to cell phone failure. Al said that two people would be good but it would be nice to have several more dispersed throughout the entire parade route. The membership is generally in favor of helping out. Al said that he would get back to us with the specific details of their needs at a later date.

Craig then asked for a volunteer to be net control for for the month of February. Dave Steiner, agreed to do it.

Terry indicated that NBEMS practice participation was down to two participants.

Repeater Report:

Craig started the discussion about the new repeater which, thanks to Elmer is up and running.

Doug brought up the topic of a PL tone on the new repeater. Phil (K3PJ) posed the question: Do we need it? Elmer answered that it would reduce false keying from noise and other repeaters from a distance, which has been a problem in the past.

Phil and others suggested that it would be nice to be able to use older radios. This was agreed by many to be a significant issue. This issue was tabled for a few minutes.

Craig introduced the idea of getting an external controller for the new repeater. Dave Dzelsky (N3DZ) pointed out limitations of the new repeater that result from the inflexibility of the current internal controller. For example, The repeater ID will override someone who is talking if the ID timer time is exceeded. The resulting discussion focused on controllers by ARCOM (RC210) and SCOM (7330). The RC210 is deemed the most appropriate due to its ease of programming through the Microsoft Windows environment and available features. Both with the necessary internal feature boards, interfacing hardware and software are of comparable cost either of which is more than the new repeater. Dave D. said that with all options the RC210 will be around $700 and the SCOM around $100 less) Dave D. also pointed out that the ARCOM can control more than one repeater. It could be used to control the 440 repeater.

Fred suggested that the 440 repeater should remain separate so that we have a backup repeater in case of controller failure.

Craig said that the only caveat of getting the special deal is that we do not sell the repeater within a year of obtaining it.

Since the ARCOM could be purchased as a kit Elmer and Fred suggested that anything we get should be obtained fully wired and ready to install.

Dave Steiner made a motion to collect the funds necessary to purchase the new controller before actually buying it. This was seconded by by Fred. This was voted on and carried unanimously. Terry suggested that we keep the current repeater fund open for this purpose. Dave S. made a second motion to this effect and Alton (N3PHL) seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Craig brought up the PL tone issue again.
After much random discussion of the issue by various members, a tone other than 123 was suggested. Fred suggested that we investigate the tone used by the interfering repeater out of Ohio and other tones to be avoided. Dave S. Alton, and Craig suggested that we keep the tone off for a while. Fred moved to wait to apply the PL tone until after the proposed new controller is installed. This was seconded by Alton. The motion was carried (one opposed).

Denny (KC3DTB) Volunteered to write a letter that we could send out to assist the club in fund-raising from external sources.

New Business:

Elmer brought up the issue of solar power for charging the battery that supports the repeater. He suggested that we may be able to eliminate the commercial power completely, saving over $400 per year. The new repeater does not need to be heated in winter and the old duplexer cans have functioned well without heat. After much discussion of pros and cons Fred Suggested that we investigate the solar installation at yellow creek to get more concrete information. Doug suggested that we deal with the repeater controller before getting into the solar issue without accurate cost information on. There was some discussion about special electrical rates and various fees associated with commercial electricity. Alton said that special rates were not a viable option.

Terry said that 9 safety vests have been received and 7 are on back order.

Dave S. brought up the fact that there has been some trouble with the Monday night net in that the net control operator has failed to show up twice in the past few weeks without notifying anyone. He vigorously reiterated that when one makes a commitment it should be kept. Several issues came up in the resulting discussions. The ARES net is supposed to serve a meaningful function, but does it? What is our relationship with the Emergency Management Agency of Indiana County? There are many issues that should be addressed.

Activity Report

2014 was a fairly busy year. See the Presidents Report at the end of this document.

The 50/50 drawing netted $ 22.00 which was donated back to the club with $11.00 going to the repeater fund.

The January 6, 2015 meeting of ICARC was adjourned at 9:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Larry Freeman, Secretary (N3LT)

2014 ICARC REPORT (Craig Bigler, President)

I ask that our members (to) take a moment and remember Dennis Whitson KB3LBQ and Linda Kiehl (wife of Jerry WB3DUD). These longtime club members will be missed.

This year's report will highlight activities that were a departure from previous years. The club decided to connect to social media, so a Facebook account was opened to showcase the club's activities on that medium. We added another Hoss's Fundraiser, the dinner kit (serves four), which went over quite well. We expect to do more this year.

This April, the MS walk was held on Saturday instead of Sunday. Doug K3LAB took the job of net control. We had a total of 13 operators. Sandwich board signs were used to advertise the club's support of the walk.

June is always busy for amateur radio in Indiana County. Three dipoles, 20m 40m and a G5RV were put up at Camp Seph Mack along with two HF stations during Cub Scout Day Camp. 150 scouts and their leaders were present through the day of our demonstration. The weather didn't cooperate, in spite of this, contacts were made and Amateur Radio was showcased.

The club borrowed the County's antenna trailer for Airport Awareness Day. The tower was used as a central support for two dipoles. A G5RV was supported with the club's portable poles. Dave N3DZ built an impressive go box and operated it at this event. We had great weather and made 358 contacts in 30 states and 4 countries. QSL cards were sent to confirm the contacts.*

Two new members, Dave KA3KFA and Joe KC3CDG were big parts in our radio events, from set up to operation and eventually tear down,the club sure appreciates your help.

Dave KA3KFA hosted Field Day at his property. The County generator was utilized. For the first time in recent memory, the club submitted a log to the ARRL. W3BMD operated 5A and logged 550 QSOs resulting in 1976 points. Thanks to Dave's family for the great food and accommodations.

Dave also hosted the PA QSO Party in October. Three stations were set up using a variety of wire and directional antennas.The County loaned the club the antenna trailer and the portable light plant. The light plant was the perfect tool for this event since the days were getting shorter. 537 QSOs were made resulting in 51,453 points. (92 CW and 445 phone). The club ranked 33 out of 46 organizations.

A Technician license class was held at the County EMA during the month of October. The club experienced another first, 8 students tested, 8 students passed. The club gained two more new members, Denny KC3DTB and Ian KC3DTE. Thanks to all the instructors, VE's and all who publicized the class.

A word about equipment improvements. The 440 repeater was worked on and repaired. The 91 repeater experienced quite a bit of noise. Many hours were spent by Larry N3LT and Elmer KB3WG trying to track down the noise source. The new dongle and a laptop were employed to tune the repeaters and to try to find the source of the noise. A work party was assembled on two occasions to install ground rods and to cad weld (exothermic welding) grounding conductors to the rods. A suitable ground bus was installed in the repeater shack. No ground resistance value available at this time.

Lastly, The club applied for and received a new Yaesu DR-1X repeater at a greatly reduced price, ($500 vs $1700) . The repeater is currently in use.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Bigler
KB3LBU

***** Secretary's Comment: For Airport Awareness Day, although there were 358 contacts, approximately 50 QSL cards were received by the club and we sent them ours.